

Two-sail Bateau (Skipjack) E.C. COLLIER
Mill Street at Navy Point
St. Michaels
Talbot County
Maryland

HAER No. MD-77

HAER
MD,
21-SAIMI,
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PHOTOGRAPHS
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Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

Two-Sail Bateau E.C. COLLIER
HAER No. MD 77

Rig/Type of Craft: sloop (skipjack)

Trade: oystering

Official Number: 207902

Principal Dimensions: Length: 52.0' Gross Tonnage: 19
Beam: 17.9' Net Tonnage: 14
Depth: 5.7'

note: register dimensions

Location: Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum
St. Michaels, Maryland

Date of Construction: 1910

Designer: unknown

Builder: George Washington Horseman, Deal Is.,
Maryland

Present Owner: Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum
St. Michaels, Maryland

Present Use: oystering industry exhibit (afloat at
present, to be exhibited on land)

Significance: This vessel represents one
of the oldest and last boats
in the Maryland oyster dredging fleet

Researcher: Richard J. Dodds
Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, 1989

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Principal Dimensions¹

Length:	52.0'	Gross Tonnage:	19
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Depth:	5.7'		

Designer

Undetermined²

Where Built/Builder

E.C. COLLIER was built by George Washington Horseman at Wenona on Deal Island, Maryland. The Horsemans were a local family, many of whose male members were oystermen. George W. Horseman was born on September 16, 1863 and died August 17, 1936. He was a waterman and part time boatbuilder with "a wheelbarrow and toolkit" who built boats wherever the owners wanted. According to one source, E.C. COLLIER was built on the bank of a slough called "Big Ditch" which is on the east side of Wenona Harbor. The completed vessel was launched by sliding her into the water on large poles.³

Date of Construction

E.C. COLLIER was launched in 1910.⁴ The exact date construction began is unknown; no written agreement to build has been located.

Original Construction

With regard to her outboard configuration, COLLIER differs little from when she was built except for her marked deterioration, particularly the excessive hogging of the hull.

She was typical of Chesapeake Bay two-sail bateaux (skipjacks) of her size, with V-bottom construction, clipper bow with bowsprit, outboard rudder transom stern with, heavily raked mast with jib-headed main and club-footed jib. The transom has a shallow "tuck" on either side where the transom meets the chine.

Like most of her sisters, the hull of E.C. COLLIER is largely built of Eastern Shore loblolly pine. This includes bottom, side and deck planking, recent, added frames which run from chine log to deck, and the chine. Mast and spars were usually of loblolly pine, although her present mast is made of cypress and was shaped

out by Tom Howell of Dorchester County, Maryland. As with most bateaux, stern and sternpost and centerboard are of white oak. Remaining, earlier, frames are also of oak. The knees, clamp, strongbacks, and deck beams and keel are of yellow pine. Covering board appears to have originally been oak (a small section remains forward) although the current one is of pine.

Other typical construction elements found in skipjacks are the use of several strongbacks running thwartships over the keelson from chine to chine (COLLIER has two) and the use of tierods running thwartships to help stiffen the hull (COLLIER has three running full-width). Like most of her type, COLLIER's hull is iron-fastened, sheathed with metal plates at the waterline to prevent ice damage, and has considerable crown to the deck beams. Decorative trailboards are carried at the longhead, in typical Bay fashion.

Approximately what percentage of the COLLIER is original construction is hard to determine. The keel and keelson, some of the frames, deck beams, knees and clamp are probably original, but the majority of the planking and most of the deck structures have probably been replaced several times. Older knees are made from natural crooks. The chine logs have probably been replaced, with newer frames of pine notched over the logs.

Numerous patches and filler pieces have been added over the years with the quality of workmanship declining as the state of the oyster industry declined. Many sister frames have been added and "stealers" inserted into the stern to try to correct a hogging problem that is common to the type. Hogging has resulted in a marked droop in the keel aft. Rotten wood where the keel meets the aft deadwood has been replaced with cement. Although the present deck layout of the E.C. COLLIER is similar to its original configuration, the structures themselves have undoubtedly been replaced several times. The large aft cabin interior is relatively new, being lined with modern materials, although it follows the traditional layout of berths on either side, facing fore and aft, and a stove placed against the forward bulkhead. Forward of the main cabin is a smaller midhouse that could sleep two men. Most of this is lined with tongue and groove paneling and represents probably the oldest interior materials. Further forward lies the housing to the dredge winding engine, of relatively recent construction.

By the time E.C. COLLIER was built, engine-powered winders had come into widespread use, although the present four cylinder motor is just the last in a series of engines installed.

The Hettinger Company winders could possibly be original as could the steering wheel made by R.H. Dougherty and Co., Baltimore, and steering mechanism.

No set of original construction plans is known to exist, and such plans were not commonly used on the Chesapeake. In the Museum's collections, however, is a 1949 sail plan (see attached).⁵

Alterations and Additions

E.C. COLLIER has undergone few alterations and additions, although numerous repairs have been made through the years. She has kept the same sloop rig and, due to the Maryland law banning dredging under power, has never had an engine fitted. Most of the changes that were made have been in the nature of substituting similar materials or items for those rotten or worn out.

Original and Subsequent Owners

COLLIER's first license (#18) was issued to Eddie Collier of Deal Island, Maryland on August 26, 1910. Collier was sole owner and Moody Webster was listed as master. Homeport was Crisfield, Maryland.

Seven years later, on October 2, 1917, license number 19 was issued indicating Collier as half owner and Ross E. Collier of Baltimore as additional half owner.⁶ Moody Webster remained as master.

In 1920 E.C. COLLIER was sold out of the family, and license number 20 was issued on August 17, 1920 to William C. Todd of Chance (2/3 owner) and Robert McBride, also of Chance (1/3). McBride was also listed as master, and the boat's homeport was still Crisfield.

Jefferson Dix of Tylerton, Maryland, bought the COLLIER in 1926; license #6 issued on September 22, 1926. He remained owner and master until 1941, after which she underwent numerous changes of homeport and ownership. These changes are summarized as follows:

<u>Lic #</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Homeport</u>	<u>Owner(s)</u>	<u>Master</u>
11	1/3/41	Cape Charles	Jefferson Dix Bloxom, VA	Jefferson Dix
11	10/27/41	Crisfield	Rufus Crockett of Crisfield	Jefferson Dix

<u>Lic #</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Homeport</u>	<u>Owner(s)</u>	<u>Master</u>
17	1/9/42	Cape Charles	Ozzie L. and Coley Dize of Tangier, VA	Ozzie Dize
28	10/21/42	Baltimore	William Smith of Baltimore	William Smith
23	10/01/43	Crisfield	William Smith of Crisfield	William Smith
15	1/28/44	Cape Charles	Harry Wheatley of Tangier, VA	Frank Parks
18	10/27/44	Crisfield	William Smith of Crisfield	William Smith
28	1/25/45	Crisfield	James Whitelock of Chance (1/2) and Charles Whitelock of Chance (1/2)	Charles Whitelock
26	2/21/46	Cambridge	Gordon S. Pope of Oxford, MD.	Gordon Pope
21	12/24/49	Cambridge	John P. and Laura J. Kapisak of Avalon, Md.	John Kapisak

On October 25, 1955 license #20 was issued to John R. and Elsie B. Larrimore of Tilghman, Maryland, owners. John Larrimore was master. Captain and Mrs. Larrimore owned and operated the boat until 1983. On November 23, 1983, after the death of John Larrimore, the COLLIER was transferred to Elsie B. Larrimore, Pauline L. Cummings, and John R. Cummings, "joint tenants with right of survivorship," and her homeport changed to Norfolk, Virginia. Pauline Cummings and John Cummings became joint owners on January 15, 1985. On November 14, 1988 they donated the vessel to the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum.

The preceding list of owners and masters was compiled from Custom House records at the National Archives and from U.S. Coast Guard records for documented vessels.

Source of Original Name

At first it was thought that the vessel was named after its first owner, Edward Collier (commonly known as Eddie Collier). A dredgeboat named EDDIE COLLIER, built in 1902 and named after Edward, was actively employed in 1910. However, when the 1900 and 1910 Census records and Collier's obituary were checked it was discovered that Edward's middle initial was B.⁷ Neither Edward Collier's wife nor son, daughter, sister and brother or parents have the corresponding initials in their names.

Most of the Collier family has died out on Deal Island. The source of the original name is still, therefore, something of a mystery.

History of Type

Much has been written on skipjacks, although most has been in the form of articles and monographs. Howard I. Chapelle's study of the type has been the basis for many, later writings. In 1932 he described the skipjack as "one of the most striking and distinctive of American small sailing boat types."⁸

It is generally agreed that the skipjack or two-sail bateau evolved as a distinct type of vessel in the 1890s, from earlier, smaller V-bottomed and flat bottomed skiffs and sharpies, that were common on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. These boats were generally sloop-rigged, sometime with a small cabin forward. A well aft held the hand winders where the crew could work without interfering with the boom.

The term skipjack is possibly derived from a species of fish that spring or skim over the water. At one time they were more commonly referred to as two-sail bateaux on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, where most of them were built. The term bateau is commonly used on the Bay to describe any deadrise (or V-bottom) hull and may be due to the early French settlers on the Chesapeake.

The majority of two-sail bateau were built between Tilghman Island, Maryland and Pungoteague Creek, Virginia on the Eastern Shore. Within this region there developed several characteristic styles that were discernable to the experienced watermen. One of the centers of bateau building was around Deal Island in Somerset County, where the E.C. COLLIER was built. Most of the large two-sail bateaux were built in the period 1910-1915 including ROBERT L. WEBSTER, at 60 feet, probably the largest built. She weighed 35 tons and could carry 1,200 bushels of oysters. Most averaged around 45 feet long.

A skipjack's hull was shallow, wide, and V-bottomed to provide a steady working platform, with low freeboard to facilitate handling dredges. Centerboard, clipper bow and tall, raking mast, set far forward, were standard. The bow was often made from three to ten logs or "chunks" placed thwartships and hewn to shape. This was later replaced by staving which was dubbed off smooth when in place. Most were built with outboard rudder, and a low, open rail supported by short pipe stanchions.

General rules for construction were: greatest beam was one-third the length on deck; length of mast equalled length on deck plus the greatest beam; the length of the bowsprit, outboard, was equal to the greatest beam; length of the boom was equal to the length of the hull on deck; and the mast step was located $1/5-1/6$ of the length waterline, abaft the stem.

The boats were heavily built to withstand the strains of hauling the dredge and carrying the heavy rig in winter weather.

The extreme rake of the mast had several advantages: (1) center of effort on the mainsail changed little when the sail was reefed, thus giving a minimum of lee helm (2) main halyard vertically over the hatchway which could be used for hoisting (3) more useable deck space with mast set well forward (4) mast hoops tended to jam less than on straight masts (5) the sails could be lowered into lazyjacks without tying reef points and (6) the boom end will not trail in water, preventing luffing in a strong wind. Custom, too, undoubtedly played a part, as raked masts were a feature of many other Bay types.

By law Skipjacks, as with other types in the dredging fleet, could only dredge for oysters under sail. This conservation measure precluded an engine in the boat and led to the use of an engine-powered pushboat, slung off davits at the stern. These could legally be used to assist dredgeboats in and out of harbor and in making the trip to and from the dredging grounds. The donation of the COLLIER's pushboat is still in private hands. It was built by Sam and Dave McQuay of Wittman, Maryland around 1970. Nothing is known about the original pushboat.

Early skipjacks, like all other types of dredgeboats, were first equipped with hand-operated winches, or winders, that were used to haul the heavy dredges aboard. This back-breaking chore was made considerably easier with the development of gasoline-powered winding engines in the first years of the 20th century. These were often single-cylinder Palmer engines that were gradually replaced when second-hand automobile engines became popular in the 1940s.

The winding motor was sited on the centerline of a dredgeboat and was connected to a set of axles on the winding mechanism that rolled or unrolled the cable. Attached to each cable was a 200 pound dredge consisting of a steel frame holding a bag made of steel mesh.

Oysters were scooped up in the bag by a bar with teeth attached to the bottom of the frame. The dredges would both be overboard at the same time, and trailing astern as the skipjack hauled them over an oyster bed. Both dredges are normally hauled inboard together and the catch sorted (culled) on deck. A set of steel rollers mounted on each rail protected the wooden structure of the boat from abrasion.

Relationship to History

In the early 1800s dredgeboats from the Delaware Bay, New York and New England began to appear in Chesapeake waters, as the supply of oysters in those areas became rapidly depleted due to over harvesting.

Alarmed by this invasion from the North, the state of Maryland banned the use of dredges in Maryland waters in the 1820s.

Long handled tongs only were permitted. But this proved difficult to enforce and in 1865 the law was amended to permit dredging under sail by licensed Maryland vessels.

Looser dredging restrictions and the growing demand for oysters after the Civil War, coupled with improvements in rail transportation and canning techniques, led to a tremendous boom in the oystering industry. "King Oyster" reigned supreme in the waters of the Chesapeake in the second half of the 19th century.

This multi-million dollar business was surveyed by George Brown Goode in The Fishery Industries of the United States, published in 1887. The survey showed that in 1880 there were 700 vessels employed in dredging, manned by some 5,600 men. In addition, there were 880 hand-scraping boats employing some 3,000 men, and some 5,145 men engaged in hand tonging.¹³

Inevitably, competition arose between dredgers, scrapers and tongers over rights to oysters, often provoked by dredgeboats poaching oysters illegally in the shallow waters reserved for tongers. Conflict between the various groups of oystermen and between those of Maryland and Virginia over rights in the Bay led to the formation of "Oyster Navies" by both states in an effort to keep the peace.

The boom in the oystering industry led to a corresponding boom in shipbuilding as schooners, sloops, pungies, and bugeyes were produced. These tended to be relatively large vessels, demanding the skills of experienced shipcarpenters to build.

Such vessels proved adequate in 1884, the high water mark of the industry, when 15,000,000 bushels of Maryland oysters were harvested. After that year the harvest of oysters steadily declined, and by 1910, the year E.C. COLLIER was launched, only 3,500,000 bushels were wrested from Maryland waters.¹¹

In this period when the oyster catch was declining and shipbuilding costs were rising, the two-sail bateau or skipjack was born. The V-bottom skipjack may have lacked the grace and fine lines of its predecessor, the bugeye, but it was cheaper and easier to build. With their wide beams, hard chines, and low freeboards, skipjacks provided stable working platforms specifically suited for dredging. The jib-headed sloop rig was easy to handle, and handy when coming about for another "lick" across an oyster bar. While mainly used for dredging, skipjacks carried seasonal produce in summer if money could be made. Skipjacks like E.C. COLLIER filled a need at the turn of the century and were the last commercial sailing type developed on the Chesapeake.

E.C. COLLIER was built in the great age of skipjack construction from 1910-1915. She was owned by Edward Collier of the well known family of that name in Deal Island. Most of the island's inhabitants made their living from the Bay and Edward Collier was no exception. He was born on May 18, 1863 and died March 8, 1950. For most of his life he was a blacksmith, like his father George W. Collier. Collier had a wife, Gertrude, and two children.¹²

The blacksmith was an important member of the community and he would have made much of the ironwork used in local dredgeboats. By 1910 he had enough capital to place an order with George W. Horseman for the E.C. COLLIER. Horseman, also of Deal Island, had already built several other bateaux for the Collier family including the EDDIE COLLIER in 1902 and GEORGE W. COLLIER in 1900.

In his application for official number for E.C. COLLIER, the boat's intended service was indicated as oystering and freight. Moody Webster of Deal Island was her first master and she carried a crew of six. Moody Webster was 33 years old in 1910 and was described as mariner in the Census of that year.¹³

Thereafter she was used for oyster dredging during the season, November 1 through March 15. When not dredging, the gear was removed and she was laid up or took on the occasional freighting of Eastern Shore produce to Baltimore. She appears in the background of a painting by marine artist Louis Feuchter entitled, "Watermelon Laden Sailing Craft at Long Dock, Pratt Street, Baltimore, c1930."¹⁴

Little disturbed the hard toil of dredging oyster year after year. On December 31, 1952, however, she made news when she went to the rescue of the crew of the dredgeboat GLADYS MELBA, which hit an obstruction near Sharp's Island and was wrecked.¹⁵

IN 1971 she made headlines again when a December storm blew five dredgeboats from their moorings at Knapps Narrows. The COLLIER was swept out into the Choptank, eventually grounding near

Neavitt. Leaking considerably, she was taken to the Richardson Boat Yard near Cambridge for repairs.¹⁶ While skippered by Captain John R. Larrimore from 1955 to 1983 she had the reputation of being a happy ship. Like most dredgeboats, the crew were on a share system. From the day's catch one-third went to the boat, and after food and fuel were paid for, the remainder of the proceeds were divided equally between captain and crew. One small, but important benefit extended by Captain Larrimore was the free issue of waterproof gloves to the crew (a crewman could often wear out several pairs a week handling oysters).

COLLIER was featured in The Sun Magazine in 1972 in an article entitled "Oyster Dredging: A Big Year." She was then referred to by some watermen as the "Old Folks Home" because a few years back all of crewmen were well along in years.¹⁷ The cook was "Peewee" Grace, who had a talent for turning out hearty meals on the little butane gas stove in the cabin.

The boat was a frequent participant in Chesapeake Appreciation Days' Annual Skipjack Races in the 1970s. In 1978 she took first place in the workboat race.

Captain Larrimore was highly respected and always kept the COLLIER well maintained, but the continuing decline in the oystering industry was beyond his control. Years of hard work began to take its toll on the vessel, and with the death of Larrimore in 1983, the aging boat spent most of the time alongside her berth in Tilghman Island, which only hastened her decline.

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On May 16, 1985 E.C. COLLIER was one of 22 dredgeboats nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. At that time she was one of nineteen surviving working skipjacks built prior to 1912. In the summer of 1988 she was surveyed by the Maryland Historical Trust as part of the Skipjack Preservation Project Funded by Critical Issues Grant from the National Trust. Shortly, thereafter, in November 1988 the boat was donated to the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum. At the time of her retirement the COLLIER carried oyster dredging license #7.

E.C. COLLIER has reached the end of her working days, but the Museum intends to preserve this historic vessel as the centerpiece of the landbased exhibit that will illustrate to the visiting public the history of oyster dredging in Maryland and its impact on the Chesapeake's economic and social development.

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U.S. Census Records, Somerset County. Microfilm copies from National Archives and Wicomico County Public Library.

NOTES

1. Register dimensions as found in Merchant Vessels of the United States of 1911, the year after the launch of E.C. COLLIER. Dimensions have remained the same in all documentation to-date with the exception of depth. On the first license, issued 1910, depth is given as 4.3 feet. In current Certificate of Documentation depth is stated as 4.5 feet.
2. Few Chesapeake Bay workboats had a designer other than the builder. Ultimate appearance was the result of consultation between builder and intended owner.
3. Telephone conversation between Norman Plummer, CBMM researcher and Harvey Horseman, July 31, 1989. George W. Horseman's name appears as builder in the application for official number, dated August 24, 1918, on file in the Crisfield Custom House Records, National Archives.
4. COLLIER was first measured at Crisfield, Maryland in 1910, and her first license issued August 26, 1910 at the same place.
5. Albert E. Brown and Brother Manuscript Collection, Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, St. Michaels, Maryland.
6. It was a common practice for individuals to own shares in a vessel. Profits were apportioned based on an individual's percentage of ownership.
7. United States Census for Somerset County Tangier District/ District #14 1880, 1900, 1910 and Marylander and Herald, March 17, 1950.
8. Howard I. Chapelle, "The Skipjack," Yachting, June 1932, p. 67.
9. Ibid, p. 68.
10. George Brown Goode, The Fisheries and Fishing Industry of the United States, Sect. 2, pp. 429-448. Handscrapers used small dredges in shallow waters near their home ports.
11. John R. Wennersten, The Oyster Wars of Chesapeake Bay, p. 137.
12. United States Census for Somerset County, Tangier District, 1900, and Marylander and Herald, March 17, 1950.

13. United States Census, 1910, Somerset County, Deal Island, District #14, 1910.
14. Robert H. Burgess, This Was Chesapeake Bay, pp. 151-152.
15. Star Democrat, January 9, 1953, p. 1.
16. Star Democrat, December 22, 1971, p. 3.
17. Ralph Reppert, "Oyster Dredging: A Big Year." The Sun Magazine, February 20, 1972, p. 23.

10/26/89

J. E. Dix

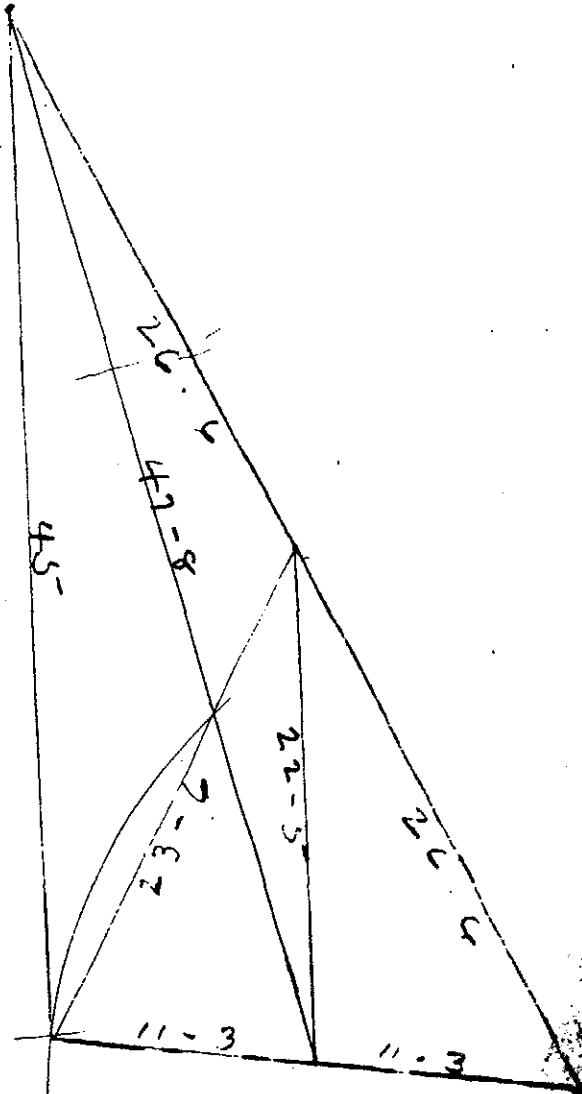
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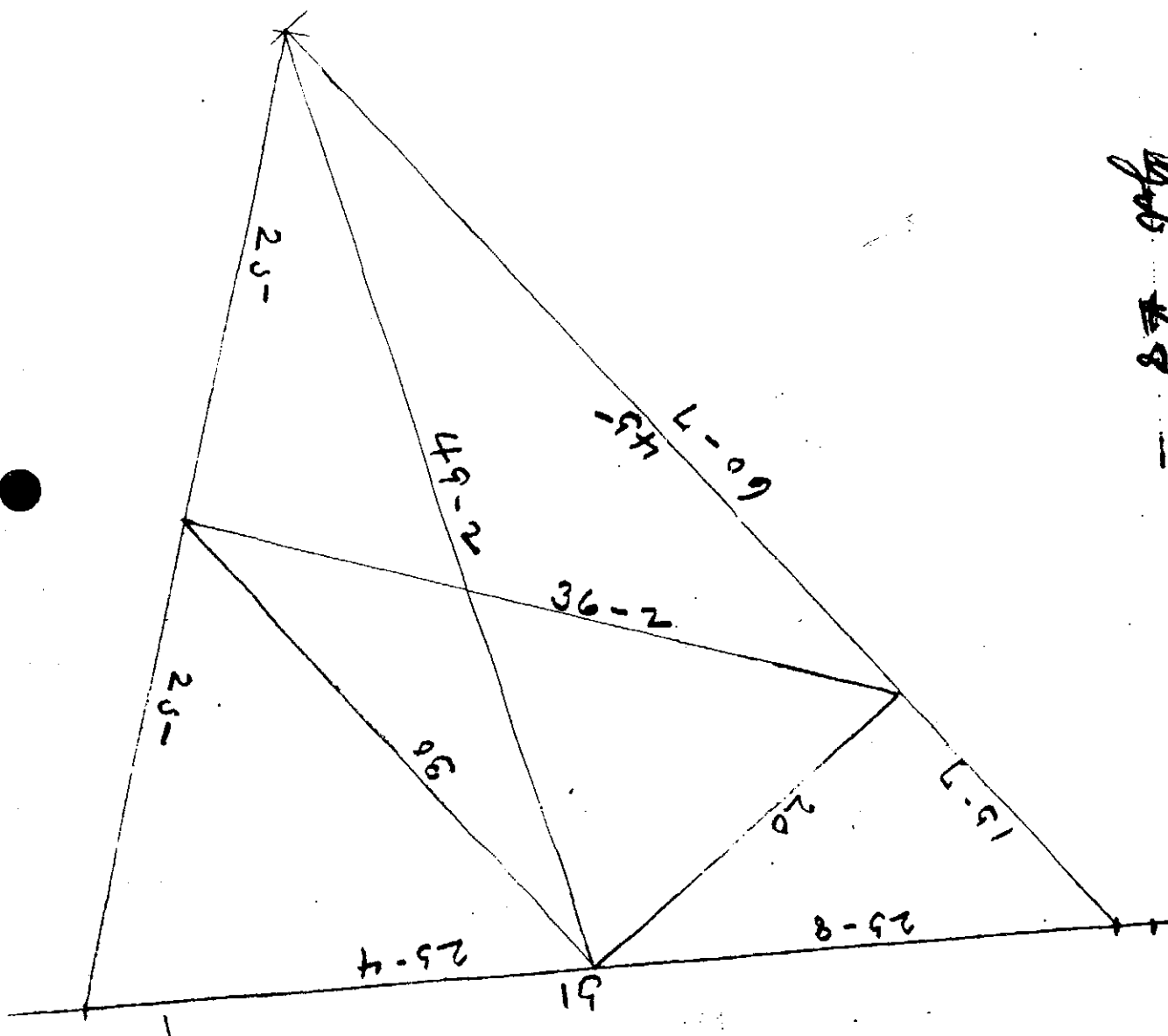
Bateau E.C. Collier

May 54-6
I d 45-
Foot 22-6



Plant	52-9
Leak	63-3
Foot	50-6

1349
Paterson E. E. Gallen.
98. Revere
Oxford 11/14
Merrimack #6 274 yds
Bib #8



УЗБЕКИ ВЪЗРОДИЛИ СЕ ПОСЛЕДНО